

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2373 PRIORITY
INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
ALL CONGENS IN CANADA POUCH

UNCLAS CALGARY 0199

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: PINT, CA
SUBJ: CLARK BLASTS LIBERALS AND SETS FORTH ISSUES FOR
PC ELECTION CAMPAIGN

1. WITH FEDERAL ELECTION SEEMINGLY IMMINENT, PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE (PC) LEADER JOE CLARK FIRED OPENING SALVOES OF TORY ELECTION CAMPAIGN WITH BLISTERING ATTACK ON TRUDEAU GOVERNMENT AT ALBERTA PC CONVENTION IN CALGARY OVER WEEKEND OF APRIL 7. TO CHEERS OF TORY FAITHFUL, PC LEADER DESCRIBED TRUDEAU REGIME AS INCOMPETENT, CORRUPT, AND "WORST GOVERNMENT IN HISTORY OF CANADA". PRIME MINISTER HAD, ACCORDING TO CLARK, "DIVIDED THE COUNTRY, DEVASTATED THE ECONOMY, AND DESTROYED PUBLIC CONFIDENCE".

2. CLARK CALLED FOR: (A) TAX CUTS FOR LOW AND MIDDLE INCOME WORKERS AND CONCESSIONS FOR ENTERPRENEURS WHO CAN BUILD A BETTER CANADA, (B) NATIONAL INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY TO CONCENTRATE ON AREAS WHERE CANADA HAD COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE, (C) DECREASED GOVERNMENT REGULATION OF PRIVATE SECTOR, (D) RETURN TO PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY, AND (E) MARKED CUT BACK IN CANADIAN FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. CLARK SAID HE WOULD MAKE FEDERAL SYSTEM WORK BY PROMOTING "NATIONAL HARMONY"

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NOT "NATIONAL UNITY", SINCE ESSENCE OF CANADA WAS CULTURAL DIVERSITY. FEDERALISM WAS PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE PROVINCES, AND CLARK PROMISED TO WORK TOWARD THAT END BY REDUCING COMPETING (FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL) JURISDICTIONS AND SUPPORTING CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM.

3. IN ADDITION TO MAJOR CAMPAIGN ADDRESS, CLARK PUT FORWARD

PC POLICY PAPER ON NEEDED CHANGES IN MANAGEMENT OF CANADIAN GOVERNMENT AND PARLIAMENTARY REFORM. PAPER CALLED FOR RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF PRINCIPLE OF DEMOCRATIC ACCOUNTABILITY AND AMONG OTHER SUGGESTIONS, SPECIFICALLY PROPOSED: (A) REFORM OF PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE SYSTEM, (B) MORE PARLIAMENTARY INPUT INTO BUDGET PROCESS, (C) SUNSET LAWS TO PROVIDE PERIODIC REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF REGULATORY BOARDS AND AGENCIES, (D) PARLIAMENTARY SCRUTINY AND POSSIBLE "PRIVATIZATION" OF CROWN CORPORATIONS, (E) FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT, AND (F) PUBLIC INTEREST DISPUTES COMMISSION TO HELP ELIMINATE PUBLIC SECTOR STRIKES IN ESSENTIAL AREAS.

4. COMMENT: CLARK PUT ON A FIRST CLASS PERFORMANCE IN CALGARY. HIS SPEECH WAS REPEATEDLY INTERRUPTED BY STANDING OVATIONS, AND HE HANDLED QUESTIONS FROM THE CONVENTION FLOOR WITH CONFIDENCE AND APLOMB. CLARK CONCENTRATED ON ECONOMIC ISSUES AND INTEGRITY AND OPENNESS IN GOVERNMENT, AND HE OBTAINED STRONG SHOW OF SUPPORT FROM ALBERTA PC CONVENTION DELEGATES AND PERSONAL ENDORSEMENT OF ALBERTA PREMIER LOUGHEED. AS SEEN FROM HERE, CLARK LOOKS READY AND ABLE FOR TOUGH ELECTION CAMPAIGN. (PC POLICY PAPER BEING AIR-POUCHED TO EMBASSY AND EUR/CAN).
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